

Foreword

KIDS COUNT: The State of the Child in Tennessee is published by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth with partial funding from the **Annie E. Casey Foundation**.

The **Annie E. Casey Foundation** funds a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policy makers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, the national KIDS COUNT project seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children. At the national level, the principal activity of the initiative is the publication of the annual KIDS COUNT Data Book, which uses the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children and their families. The Foundation funds statewide KIDS COUNT projects in 50 states, including Tennessee.

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) is an independent state agency created by the Tennessee General Assembly to advocate for improvements in the quality of life for children and families, coordinate regional councils on children and youth, administer state and federal juvenile justice funds, evaluate services to children in state custody, and compile and disseminate information on Tennessee's children.

Data used in this publication were collected from various state and federal agencies and represent the most current data available during the publication process. Narratives on each of the child indicators were developed to provide an overview of the five categories, including healthy infants, children and teens; child/teen well-being; education; economic security; and demographics.

This year's publication displays copies of original artwork completed by children in state custody. The artwork displayed on the front cover and throughout the publication was provided to KIDS COUNT in response to an art contest in which children in state custody drew their pictures based on KIDS COUNT topics.

Special thanks is given to:

The **Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth** for its financial support in providing prizes for each of the participating children. This is the second year that MCCY provided financial support to make the art contest possible.

and

The **Tennessee Department of Children's Services** and the participating **Tennessee Preparatory School (TPS)** staff for allowing the children to be a part of the project.